

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. By this communication, claim 20 is added. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 20 can be found, for example, on page 18 lines 1-12 of the disclosure. Claims 1-20 are pending where claim 3 is withdrawn.

In numbered paragraphs 6 and 11 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 4-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for alleged unpatentability over *Yaung et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6, 446,069). Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the *Yaung* patent in view of CFR Title 21, as asserted in paragraph 9 of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As shown in exemplary Figures 1-11, Applicants describe a method in which access rights to functions of an application software program for an analytical laboratory apparatus are assigned to various users based on a role-specific set of rights associated with various user roles. Electronic records are stored in a relational database that protects the records against modification or deletion. A history of activities and access related to the software program and each electronic record is maintained through an audit trail. The electronic records can be authenticated by attaching at least one electronic signature of a user.

Claims 1 and 18 broadly encompasses the embodiments as variously described in the Specification and illustrated, for example in Figs. 1-11. Claim 1 recites a method for controlling electronic records comprising, among other steps, maintaining a history of access entries and activities performed in the application software program. Claim 18 recites a method comprising a signing procedure for authenticating electronic records with a plurality of electronic signatures, the method

having among other steps, establishing a list of signature meanings to be attached to the electronic signatures, wherein each signature meaning in the list is ranked based on a signature level.

The *Yaung* patent does not render Applicants' claims obvious because it fails to disclose or suggest every feature recited therein.

The *Yaung* patent discloses a computer-implemented access control system that restricts user access by checking application privileges of a user when the user logs onto a digital library. The system checks application privileges through a definition vector and an access control list restricts user access to functions based on whether data in an access control table indicates that the user is associated with an application privilege for the selected function (See Figs. 4-5; col. 9, lines 1-42).

The *Yaung* patent, however, fails to describe any capability to maintain a history of access entries and activities performed in the application software program (claim 1), or establishment of a list of signature meanings to be attached to electronic signatures (claim 18) as recited in Applicants' claims. In contrast, the *Yaung* patent merely describes a technique in which a privilege vector is generated and associated with a user in an access control table so that restricted access to a digital library can be maintained (col. 9, lines 26-42).

The Examiner relies on the CFR to remedy acknowledged deficiencies of the *Yaung* patent with respect to claim 2. The CFR is directed to the validity of electronic records and how these records are defined, but fails disclose any features that can be reasonably related to the combination of features recited in Applicants' claims 1 and 18. For example, the CFR does not disclose or suggest maintaining a

history of access entries and activities or establishment of a list of signature meanings.

In the Office Action, the Examiner cited various portions of the *Yaung* patent for their alleged relevancy to Applicants' claimed features. Applicants' respectfully submit that none of these citations of the *Yaung* patent render the aforementioned features of claims 1 and 18 obvious. In the event the Examiner believes that the *Yaung* patent is still applicable, Applicants request that, in the next communication, specific portions of the *Yaung* patent be mapped to all of Applicants' claimed features so that Applicants are afforded a reasonable opportunity to more completely respond to the Office Action in an effort to expedite the prosecution of this case.

In summary, the *Yaung* patent and the CFR document when applied individually or in the combination relied upon by the Examiner, fail to disclose or suggest every feature recited in Applicants' claims. A *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to independent claims 1 and 18 and their corresponding depending claims has not been established. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Newly added claim 20 is allowable over the applied references by virtue of its dependency from claim 1, and for the additional elements recited therein. Favorable consideration and allowance of this claim are respectfully requested.

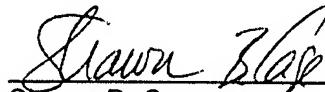
By the foregoing Amendment and remarks, Applicants have addressed all outstanding issues raised in the non-final Office Action dated August 23, 2007. Applicants submit that pending claims 1-20 are allowable and this application is in condition for allowance. If any issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

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